United Nations A/55/PV.44

General Assembly

Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

44th plenary meeting
Monday, 30 October, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 34 (*continued*)

Oceans and the law of the sea

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/55/61, A/55/386)

Report on the work of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea at its first meeting (A/55/274)

Draft resolutions (A/55/L.10 and Corr. 1, A/55/L.11)

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/204, of 17 December 1996, I call on the President of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, Mr. Chandrasekhara Rao.

Mr. Rao (International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea): It is an honour to address the Millennium General Assembly in connection with the discussion of the item entitled "Oceans and the law of the sea".

I extend to you, Sir, our congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly.

I regret to inform the Assembly of the death, in Beijing, on 10 October 2000, of Judge Lihai Zhao. Judge Zhao had been a member of our Tribunal since October 1996. His term was due to expire in September 2002. Steps are being taken to fill the vacancy created by his death, in accordance with the Statute of the Tribunal.

I am glad to report that the official opening of the headquarters building of the Tribunal in the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg took place on 3 July 2000 in the presence of several high dignitaries, including Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Tribunal is grateful to the Federal Republic of Germany and the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg for their efforts in erecting the magnificent new headquarters building. It is a matter of special satisfaction that the Federal Republic of Germany and the Tribunal concluded, on 18 October 2000, an agreement on the occupancy and use of the premises of the tribunal. We hope to operate from the new building very soon. However, negotiations with regard to the Headquarters Agreement have not been concluded. It is also our hope that we will soon reach agreement in this matter.

During this year the Tribunal heard the *Camouco* case between Panama and France. Panama brought the case to the Tribunal on 17 January 2000, and the Tribunal was able to deliver its judgement within a period of three weeks thereafter. This case has once again demonstrated the Tribunal's ability to bring about dispute settlement without unnecessary delay or expense.

Speaking on the occasion of the official opening of the headquarters building of the Tribunal, Secretary-General Kofi Annan observed that the Tribunal was

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"the keystone" of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, that it was

> "the central forum available — to States, to certain international organizations and even to some corporations — for resolving disputes about how the Convention should be interpreted and applied"

and that it had

> "already built a reputation among international lawyers as a modern court that can respond quickly." (*SG/SM/7477*)

We are thankful to the Secretary-General for his support for the Tribunal. It is also very encouraging to note that the draft resolution under consideration underlines the Tribunal's important role and authority concerning the interpretation and application of the Convention.

I wish to bring to the Assembly's attention the fact that under the Convention the Tribunal can offer flexible mechanisms for the settlement of disputes. Parties may choose between having a dispute heard by the full Tribunal, which includes all its judges, and having a dispute heard by one of its special chambers. The Tribunal has formed the following special chambers for dealing with particular categories of disputes: the Chamber of Summary Procedure, the Chamber for Fisheries Disputes and the Chamber for Marine Environment Disputes. It may form other special chambers, depending upon need.

Mr. Patrício (Mozambique), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Tribunal is also required to form an ad hoc chamber to deal with particular disputes submitted to it, if the parties so request. The composition of such an ad hoc chamber is required to be determined by the Tribunal, with the approval of the parties. This option would be of particular interest to parties that are considering arbitration. The costs of an ad hoc chamber are met from the general budget of the Tribunal and are not borne by the parties to the case. Parties also have the option of choosing ad hoc judges on their behalf. And a judgement given by any of the special chambers of the Tribunal shall be considered as having been rendered by the Tribunal. Some States have shown interest in ad hoc chambers.

The rule of law in international relations cannot be maintained unless international disputes are resolved by peaceful means. It is equally important that judgements rendered by international courts or tribunals be implemented in good faith and in time by States and other parties to international adjudication. It is encouraging to note that the United Nations Millennium Declaration found it appropriate to call upon Member States of the United Nations to ensure compliance with the decisions of the International Court of Justice, in compliance with the Charter of the United Nations, in cases to which they are parties. This exhortation is equally relevant in respect of decisions of all international courts or tribunals, whether within the framework of the United Nations system or outside it. We are very happy to see that the draft resolution notes the obligations of parties to cases before a court or a tribunal referred to in article 287 of the Convention to ensure prompt compliance with the decisions rendered by such court or tribunal.

Not many States parties to the Convention have filed declarations as regards choice of compulsory procedures for the settlement of disputes under article 287 of the Convention. Only 25 States parties have filed such declarations. It is satisfying to note that the draft resolution under consideration calls upon States parties to the Convention to consider making a written declaration choosing from the means for the settlement of disputes set out in article 287.

The establishment of new tribunals in recent years is indeed a positive development, since such bodies fulfil complementary needs. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea offers States a wide choice among several procedures for dispute settlement entailing binding decisions. Those forums are of equal standing and effect. The effect of more tribunals being available to litigants is that more disputes have come to be resolved by parties by means of their choice. There is also the additional, but in no way less important, factor that several of the newly created tribunals are also accessible to non-State entities.

The financial situation of the Tribunal remains far from satisfactory. I regret to inform the Assembly that as many as 35 States parties to the Convention have never paid their assessed contributions. Timely payments of contributions have an important bearing on the ability of our Tribunal to discharge its functions effectively. I thank the sponsors of the draft resolution for inviting the General Assembly to make an appeal to

States parties to the Convention to pay their assessed contributions to the Tribunal in full and on time.

The establishment of trust funds with a view to providing financial assistance to States for costs incurred in connection with disputes before international adjudicative forums is not a new concept. The availability of such funds would serve as a device to overcome financial impediments to the judicial settlement of disputes and to promote peaceful settlement of disputes. We welcome in this regard the decision of the Tenth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention to recommend to the General Assembly the establishment of a trust fund, to be financed through voluntary contributions, for the purpose of providing financial assistance to States in order to help them in proceedings before our Tribunal. I wish to thank again the sponsors of draft resolution A/55/L.10 for inviting the Assembly to request the Secretary-General to establish such a voluntary fund. I convey my appreciation also to those delegations that have announced contributions to the proposed fund.

There has not been much progress in the matter of ratification of the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the Tribunal. Since I addressed the Assembly on 22 November 1999, only two more States have ratified the Agreement, making the total number of ratifications four. As members are aware, for the Agreement to enter into force, at least 10 instruments of ratification or accession need to be deposited with the Secretary-General. Here too, we welcome the provision of the draft resolution calling upon States that have not done so to consider ratifying or acceding to the Agreement.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/6 of 24 October 1996, I now call on the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority, Mr. Satya N. Nandan.

Mr. Nandan (International Seabed Authority): I wish to express the appreciation of the International Seabed Authority to delegations which have expressed their support for the work of the Authority. I also express appreciation for the various references to the Authority in draft resolution A/55/L.10, which is now before the Assembly. In particular, I would like to emphasize the importance of paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, which calls upon all States that have not done, in order to achieve the goal of universal participation, to become parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and to the Agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI of the Convention. In that regard, I would like to note that there remain some 35 States which, despite being parties to the Convention, have not yet completed the necessary procedural steps to become parties to the Part-XI Agreement. Many of them ratified the Convention before the Agreement was adopted, and it is therefore necessary for them to complete the internal procedures to become parties to the additional Agreement.

By paragraph 12 of the draft resolution, the Assembly would welcome the adoption of the Regulations on Prospecting for Polymetallic Nodules in the international seabed area. Indeed, the adoption of the Regulations by the Assembly of the Authority on 13 July 2000 was the most important legislative achievement of the Authority to date. The Regulations elaborate upon and give effect to Annex III of the Convention and the Agreement for the implementation of Part XI of the Convention. They provide the mechanism for implementation of the provisions of Part XI and Annex III and are therefore a critical element of the definitive regime created by the Convention and the 1994 Agreement. The Regulations establish a standard form of contract for exploration for polymetallic nodules as well as standard terms and conditions for such contracts.

Now that the Regulations have been adopted, the Authority is in a position to issue the first set of seven licences or contracts for exclusive exploration for polymetallic nodules by seven applicants who were registered as pioneer investors by the Preparatory Commission. The plans of work submitted by the seven registered pioneer investors were approved by the Council of the Authority in August 1997, thus bringing those investors from the interim regime in resolution II of the Conference into the definitive regime created by the Convention and the 1994 Agreement. The plans of work were approved by the Council on the basis that, as soon as possible following the adoption of the Regulations, the pioneer investors would enter into contracts with the Authority.

I wish to inform the Assembly that, in accordance with that understanding, immediately following the adoption of the Regulations, and given the long delay in proceeding to the contract stage, I submitted draft contracts for exploration to each of the registered pioneer investors and invited them to review the draft

contracts and to update the programmes of work that they had submitted in 1997. It is my hope that these contracts can be concluded in the very near future so that a report can be made to the next session of the Authority on the progress of exploration under the contracts.

The final comment I wish to make on draft resolution A/55/L.10 is in relation to paragraph 14, which calls upon States which have not already done so to ratify or accede to the Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the Authority. The Protocol is of benefit to representatives of member States who participate in meetings convened by the Authority, as it deals with the immunities and privileges of such representatives on their journeys to and from the meetings as well as while they are in the territory of the host country. I would urge all member States to consider acceding to the Protocol at the earliest opportunity.

Those who have followed the work of the Authority will be aware that in June this year the Authority convened the third in its series of international workshops on issues relating to deep seabed mining. The subject of this year's workshop was mineral resources other than polymetallic nodules, including hydrothermal polymetallic sulphides, cobalt-rich crusts and gas hydrates. I am very pleased to report that the workshop was even more successful than the previous workshops, which were on environmental issues associated with exploration and on deep seabed mining technology. A very large number of experts participated in the workshop, along with representatives of member States, members of the Legal and Technical Commission and representatives of the community of non-governmental organizations. I believe the workshop was extremely useful in broadening the international community's knowledge of the resources of the deep seabed and in highlighting the potential mineral wealth of the oceans. While it is clear that much work needs to be done to unlock this potential, it is equally clear that the Authority has an important role to play both as a global repository of data and information and as a catalyst for collaborative research at the international level.

The Authority's next workshop, to be convened in 2001, will deal with the standardization of data collection and evaluation of information obtained from research and exploratory activities undertaken in the deep seabed, both in respect of mineral resources and in respect of protection and preservation of the marine environment.

I would like to take this opportunity once again to urge those member States that have not yet done so to pay their contributions to the administrative budget of the Authority in full and on time. I am pleased to say that the response to previous requests both by the Assembly of the Authority and by this Assembly has been encouraging and that the majority of member States have fulfilled their obligations promptly. This is important, because it has in turn helped the Authority to manage its finances in a responsible and efficient manner, to the extent that this year I was able to present a budget for the financial period 2001-2002 which involved no increase in expenditure in real terms. I am grateful to all member States for their cooperation in this regard, and I would once again urge those who are in arrears, including former provisional members of the Authority, to pay their outstanding contributions in full and as soon as possible to enable the Authority to continue its work in an efficient and effective manner.

I would also like to repeat the call I made during last year's debate for all Member States to consider seriously their participation in the meetings of the Authority. The Convention and the Agreement establish a very high threshold for the quorum necessary for the convening of the Assembly and the Council; in the case of the Assembly it is half the total membership of the Authority. It is apparent, therefore, that without the presence of members at the meetings of the Authority its ability to take decisions will be affected. For its part, recognizing the burden imposed on Member States, particularly smaller States, of travelling to meetings, the Authority has done its best to streamline the calendar of meetings so that, for example, there will be only one two-week meeting in 2001. Accordingly, the seventh session of the Authority will be held from 2 to 13 July 2001.

I would like to express appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report, contained in document A/55/61, and to congratulate my friends and colleagues in the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea on their fine work. As usual, the report is comprehensive, and, indeed, very useful.

I would like to say a few words about the new Open-ended Informal Consultative Process, the first meeting of which took place in May 2000. The

Informal Consultative Process was developed, among other reasons, to provide a more inclusive forum for all those interested in oceans and the law of the sea — that is, States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations — to freely discuss developments relating to the oceans in a manner which promotes an integrated approach to the oceans in the spirit of the unified and comprehensive nature of the Convention.

The process would reinforce the role and responsibilities assumed by the General Assembly in resolution 49/28 as the global institution having the competence to undertake an annual review of overall developments relating to the oceans and the law of the sea and would help to avoid a proliferation of forums, sectoral or otherwise, which would detract from the responsibilities of the General Assembly.

I commend the Co-Chairpersons of the Informal Consultative Process, Neroni Slade of Samoa and Mr. Alan Simcock of the United Kingdom, for their excellent work, and to thank them for their report, contained in document A/55/274. While I consider that the process was extremely useful, I also believe that some of the procedures followed might be improved upon to better achieve the objectives established by the General Assembly.

Many important subject areas were addressed in the meeting and the discussions were constructive and wide-ranging. I particularly appreciated the participation of a broad cross-section of representatives from a number of the specialized agencies and other international organizations and bodies, as well as representatives of the non-governmental organizations. The problem, however, is how best to reflect the discussions in a report. The procedure followed at this first meeting seemed to lead to a situation in which the meeting as a whole became engaged in the drafting of the report. Given the short time available for that exercise, it necessarily created problems. In the end, we were still drafting the Co-Chairperson's report late into the evening, after the interpreters had left.

While the desire for a perfect report is commendable, the procedure was not very helpful. In the first place, apart from the cumbersome nature of the process, it did not reflect the wide-ranging nature of the debate and the breadth of the subject matter. With so many different views expressed, many parts of the report merely reflect the lowest common denominator. Perhaps consideration might be given to streamlining the procedure and allowing the Co-Chairpersons to produce a summary report on their own responsibility, with the help of the Secretariat, on the basis of the discussion and debate during the week.

This is not an unusual procedure. It was followed from 1983 to 1986 in the Preparatory Commission for the International Seabed Authority and for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, and the same procedure continues to be followed in the Assembly and Council of the Authority, where the Chairman's statement at the end of each session is a summary of the discussions and proposals made and records all the important legislative and substantive issues. The procedure is also followed at the Meetings of States Parties to the Convention. This approach has the merit of saving a lot of time, as well as of highlighting the key issues which, in the opinion of the Co-Chairpersons, might be useful for the consideration of the General Assembly.

I hope that these observations will not be construed in any way as a criticism of the process, which was highly successful. They are intended as a constructive contribution to the development of the process, which has already been very useful and constructive and which, as most Members know, I strongly support.

I would like to comment briefly on draft resolution A/55/L.11, relating to large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing, unauthorized fishing in zones of national jurisdiction and on the high seas, fisheries by-catch and discards, and other developments. There have been important developments in fisheries management practices in recent times. Most fisheries management organizations predate the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Agenda 21 and the Agreement for the implementation of the provisions of the 1982 Convention relating to straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks, as well as the 1982 Convention itself.

The evolution in the approach to fisheries management is reflected in new fisheries arrangements, in the light of the reality of international fisheries, with their problems of over-capacity and ever-diminishing fish stocks. It is with great satisfaction, therefore, that I note the progress and the status of the United Nations fish stocks Agreement. With 28 ratifications out of the required 30, we can confidently expect this important

instrument, which is an essential complement to the 1982 Convention as it relates to the conservation and management of fisheries resources, to enter into force in the very near future.

Already the fish stocks Agreement has had a profound effect. It has become the reference point for the review of fisheries management organizations worldwide. It has been used as the basis for the establishment of at least two important regional fisheries management organizations — in the western and central Pacific Ocean and the south-east Atlantic Ocean. It has also been used as the basis for a review of the structure and mandates of several existing regional fisheries management organizations, including some which were established before the adoption of the 1982 Convention. In this regard, impressive work has been carried out under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, particularly in relation to combating the problem of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

I wish to commend the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea for the work it has done over the past year and for the great contribution it has already made to ensuring the integrity and effectiveness of the system for the peaceful settlement of disputes established under part XV of the Convention. In all of the cases it has dealt with so far the Tribunal has shown an impressive ability to respond quickly to applications and to bring about dispute settlement without unnecessary delay.

I should also like to add the condolences of the Authority to those that have already been expressed on the untimely demise of Judge Zhao Lihai. I have already sent a message to his family in Beijing.

May I conclude by taking this opportunity once again to thank all of those who spoke earlier in support of the Authority. I look forward to the continued and constructive participation of Member States in the Authority's future work.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/55/L.10 and corrigendum 1 and draft resolution A/55/L.11.

Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote before the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Uykur (Turkey): With reference to the two draft resolutions before us on the agenda item entitled "Oceans and the law of the sea", Turkey will vote against the one contained in document A/55/L.10. The reason for my delegation's negative vote is that some of the elements contained in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea that had prevented Turkey from approving the Convention are retained in this draft resolution.

Turkey supports the international efforts to establish a regime for the sea that is based on the principle of equity and is acceptable to all States. However, the Convention does not make adequate provisions for special geographical situations and, consequently, is not able to establish an acceptable balance between conflicting interests.

Furthermore, the Convention makes no provision for registering reservations on specific clauses. Although we agree with the Convention in its general intent and most of its provisions, we are unable to become party to it owing to these serious shortcomings.

This being the case, we cannot support a draft resolution that calls upon States to become Parties to the Convention on the Law of the Sea and to harmonize their national legislation with its provisions.

Regarding the draft resolution entitled "Large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing, unauthorized fishing in zones of national jurisdiction and on the high seas, fisheries by-catch and discards, and other developments", contained in document A/55/L.11, we would like to state that we welcome the efforts aimed at achieving the sustainable use and management of fisheries, as well as the establishment of regional organizations and arrangements.

Nevertheless, we are unable to give our consent to certain elements in the draft resolution, in particular the context in which the Convention on the Law of the Sea is referred to. In this respect, we cannot accept the reference made to the Convention in connection with the rights and duties of coastal States in zones under their national jurisdiction, and this reference cannot have any effect upon these States' rights as far as the question of the delimitation of such zones is concerned. It is our view that those States, while wishing to strengthen the international legal framework for

intergovernmental cooperation, will comply only with those international treaties to which they are parties, and with the principles emanating therefrom; and their respective rights will not be affected by any international convention to which they are not parties.

Mr. Albin (Mexico) *(spoke in Spanish)*: My delegation will vote in favour of draft resolution A/55/L.10 entitled "Oceans and the law of the sea", as a demonstration of our firm support for the regime set out in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and to support the efforts of the General Assembly to promote greater understanding of marine and ocean issues.

Nevertheless, we wish to formulate one or two comments on certain elements contained in the draft resolution. In operative paragraph 17, we believe that the reference to the 10-year time period contained in article 4 of annex II to the Convention is, without prejudice to the decisions adopted in this respect by the third meeting of the States Parties to the Convention, including the possibility of reviewing that time period in light of the circumstances.

We would like to underscore the fact that establishment of the voluntary trust funds, referred to in operative paragraphs 9, 18 and 20 of the draft resolution, do not affect the possibility of taking up, in the meetings of the States Parties to the Convention on the Law of the Sea, issues that gave rise to its establishment or of analysing a possible modification of its modalities.

With regard to operative paragraph 41, our understanding is that the organization of the second meeting of the Consultative Process on marine science, piracy and armed robbery at sea will not affect the rights of States to draw the meeting's attention to other issues.

In addition, my delegation will abstain on the vote on draft resolution A/55/L.11, entitled "Large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing, unauthorized fishing in zones of national jurisdiction and on the high seas, fisheries by-catch and discards, and other developments". Despite the efforts carried out to achieve consensus, this draft resolution contains a series of elements that prevent my delegation from supporting it. We regret the inclusion of the fifth and sixth preambular paragraphs. We believe inappropriate the formulation of value judgements with regard to instruments that fall outside the framework of the United Nations and to their relationship to agreements that have not yet entered into force. We feel that the General Assembly is not the appropriate forum for this type of statement.

As far as operative paragraph 19 is concerned, Mexico would like to reiterate that all activities relating to fisheries should be in accordance with the international instruments that are in force and are applicable, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

With regard to operative paragraph 26, we regret the inclusion in the title the reference to "illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing". As the Members of this Organization are aware, this issue is in the course of discussion in other international forums. The Mexican delegation understands that the treatment of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing at the next General Assembly will be limited to an analysis of how to facilitate and foster the implementation of agreements that may be reached at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and in no way can the Assembly replace that forum for decision-making on substantive aspects of this issue.

Ms. Di Felice (Venezuela) *(spoke in Spanish)*: The Venezuelan delegation will abstain in the vote on draft resolution A/55/L.10, entitled "Oceans and the law of the sea". In this regard, my delegation would like to point out that we have reservations concerning statements contained in various parts of the draft, in particular in the fourth preambular paragraph and in operative paragraph 3, relating to the operation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. In particular, Venezuela, as a country that is not a Party to the Convention, believes that we are not able to accept or oppose the provisions of the Convention as long as we have not explicitly acceded to them.

The Venezuelan delegation supports the international efforts to promote cooperation and coordination among all States on matters related to the ocean and the law of the sea. Nevertheless, we must abstain for the reasons I have just mentioned.

Mr. Alabrune (France) *(spoke in French)*: My delegation is honoured to speak on draft resolution A/55/L.11 on behalf of the Member States of the European Union, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the Union, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland,

Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, as well as on behalf of the associated countries of Cyprus and Malta, and two other States, the Republic of Moldova and Monaco.

We acknowledge that draft resolution A/55/L.11, submitted under agenda item 34 (b), contains a very great number of useful provisions. It is with regret, therefore, that we have decided to request that a vote on the text be taken in the Assembly and that we will abstain in the vote.

This year we were unable to participate in the consensus on the draft resolution, first of all because of the reference in the draft to the Framework Agreement for the Conservation of Living Marine Resources in High Seas of the South-east Pacific, better known as the Galapagos Agreement. This Agreement contains several provisions that cause problems of compatibility with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. In particular the provisions of the Agreement that provide for the possibility of the parties, outside the limited circumstances set forth in the Law of the Sea Convention, to board, inspect and escort ships found on the high seas.

In addition we would like to draw attention to the importance we attach to international cooperation for the conservation and management of living marine resources. We are engaged in discussions in several forums, in particular the Open-Ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans, where we stress the need to strengthen the role of regional fisheries organizations and the need to create new regional organizations of this kind in order to ensure the conservation and management of those resources on the basis of international law. Furthermore, we actively support all efforts under way at the international level to combat illegal, unauthorized and unreported fishing.

However, we cannot condone the use of misinterpretations of international law in the creation of regional fishing organizations. In particular, we are unsure as to the legality of some of these recently created regional fisheries organizations as regards certain fundamental principles, such as the equality of rights and obligations of States on the high seas and the fact that these organizations must be open to all States having a real interest in fisheries, as well as the freedom to fish on the high seas, which comes with the obligation to cooperate.

Nonetheless, we very much hope that it will be possible to once again have consensus on this subject in the future.

Mr. Vázquez (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Ecuador would like to refer to the draft resolution contained in document A/55/L.11, entitled "Large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing, unauthorized fishing in zones of national jurisdiction and on the high seas, fisheries by-catch and discards, and other developments". The delegation of Ecuador would like to state that we attach great importance to the matters dealt with in this draft resolution. This draft resolution establishes, we feel, an adequate balance between the various different positions of delegations regarding these matters. We also feel that this draft resolution raises various points of interest to developing countries that, like Ecuador, are convinced of the need to strengthen international cooperation in order to ensure the preservation and sustainable use of living marine resources.

In the draft resolution, among other points of interest, note is taken of an important new development in this area: the adoption of the Framework Agreement for the Conservation of Living Marine Resources in High Seas of the South-east Pacific, also known as the Galapagos Agreement. The central objective of this agreement is the preservation of living marine resources by means of international cooperation and in complete conformity with the international law regarding the sea.

For these reasons, Ecuador will vote in favour of the draft resolution contained in document A/55/L.11.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the vote.

The Assembly will now take decisions on two draft resolutions. We first turn to draft resolution A/55/L.10 and Corrigendum 1, entitled "Oceans and the law of the sea".

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I would like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/55/L.10 and Corrigendum 1: Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Dominica, Haiti, Jamaica, Kenya, Lebanon, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Panama and the Bahamas.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Saint Kitts and Nevis, Turkey.

Abstaining:

Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela.

Draft resolution A/55/L.10 and Corr.1 was adopted by 143 votes to 2, with 4 abstentions (resolution 55/7).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Guatemala, Italy and Saint Kitts and Nevis advised the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: We turn next to the draft resolution A/55/L.11, entitled "Large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing, unauthorized fishing in zones of national jurisdiction and on the high seas, fisheries by-catch and discards, and other developments".

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I would like to announce that since the publication of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/55/L.11: Belize.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining:

Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Nepal, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Draft resolution A/55/L.11 was adopted by 103 votes to none, with 44 abstentions (resolution 55/8).

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote on the resolution just adopted. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Maquieira (Chile) *(spoke in Spanish)*: The delegation of Chile, on the occasion of the General Assembly's consideration of agenda item 34, "Oceans and the law of the sea", would like to state its position concerning the resolution just adopted under agenda item 34 (b), entitled "Large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing, unauthorized fishing in zones of national jurisdiction and on the high seas, fisheries by-catch and discards, and other developments".

Our country has traditionally supported this resolution on large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing, because of the harmful effects of such fishing on the living marine resources in the southern oceans and seas. Despite its ongoing support for these resolutions as a whole, in recent years Chile has had some reservations concerning certain paragraphs of this resolution which primarily call for endorsement of the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, also known as the New York Agreement.

Chile considers that this Agreement does not provide sufficient protection for the interests of the coastal State in the contiguous high seas, as set out in article 116 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and in other provisions of that same Convention, which would allow interference by third States in the exclusive economic zone. Our country has therefore opted, for the time being, not to accede to this international Agreement.

For these reasons, and on the basis of article 117 of the Convention on the Law of the Sea, which sets out, among other things, the duty of all States to cooperate with each other in taking such measures as may be necessary for the conservation of the living resources of the high seas, Chile has acceded to the Framework Agreement for the Conservation of Living Marine Resources in High Seas of the South-east Pacific, also known as the Galápagos Agreement. That Agreement puts in place mechanisms for coastal States and high-seas fisheries to establish conservation systems for the straddling stocks and highly migratory species found within its scope of application. This Agreement is fully compatible with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which, as the Assembly is aware, imposes an obligation upon States to cooperate among themselves in the regulation of high-seas fishing.

For these reasons, our delegation was surprised to learn that the European Union had requested that a recorded vote be taken on the draft because it wished to abstain. Its justification for the request was that the Galápagos Agreement had compatibility problems with the Convention on the Law of the Sea. The parties to this Agreement have circulated a statement, which I will not delve into now, but I would like to take this opportunity to invite the European Union to exchange views with the States parties to the Galápagos Agreement on the statements made here this morning.

Mr. Bocalandro (Argentina) *(spoke in Spanish)*: The delegation of Argentina would like to comment on draft resolution A/55/L.11, which was just adopted and in whose favour we voted.

The Argentine Republic would like to point out that we understand that the expression "other entities", which appears in operative paragraph 2 of this resolution, refers to the entities listed in article 305 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Mr. Long[illegible] (Norway): Norway voted in favour of the draft resolution contained in document A/55/L.11. We strongly regret that it was impossible to adopt that draft by consensus, as has been the case in

previous years. There are shortcomings and unsatisfactory elements in the resolution. We agree with the European Union that certain provisions of the Framework Agreement for the Conservation of Living Marine Resources in High Seas of the South-east Pacific, the so-called Galápagos Agreement, gives rise to questions of compatibility with the Convention on the Law of the Sea.

In its operative part, the resolution affirms the need to strengthen the international legal framework for international cooperation in the management of fish stocks and in combating unauthorized fishing as well as illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing in a manner consistent with the Convention on the Law of the Sea and the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement.

We have consistently advocated that these are indeed the key instruments of international law in this field and we cannot accept agreements or state practice that are not compatible with them. Furthermore, we do not think that it is sufficient to reduce discards through the development and use of selective fishing gear and techniques. The practice of discards should be prohibited, as it has been under Norwegian fisheries legislation.

In our view, however, the positive elements of the resolution this year outweigh the negative. Notably, this year's resolution not only addresses isolated problems that affect the world's fisheries, but also takes a more comprehensive approach in focusing on international cooperation in relevant forums to combat illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing in general. Most importantly, the draft resolution contains core provisions on the 1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement and affirmations of the central role that regional and subregional fisheries conservation and management organizations and arrangements have in intergovernmental cooperation on the sustainable management of marine living resources.

As one of the early ratifiers of the 1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement, Norway was particularly pleased to welcome the conclusion of successful negotiations on the establishment of new regional fisheries conservation and management organizations in the South-East Atlantic and the Western and Central Pacific. It was of particular importance that these were negotiated in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Law of the Sea Convention and the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement.

We sincerely hope that it will be possible to return to consensus on this subject in the future.

Mrs. Álvarez Núñez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Cuba wishes to explain its vote in favour of resolution 55/7 on oceans and the law of the sea.

My country is firmly committed to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea as the legal framework within which all activities related to oceans and seas should be carried out. The Cuban delegation regrets that the resolution we have just adopted includes inappropriate language in operative paragraph 39, in which the Secretary-General is requested to continue to carry out the responsibilities entrusted to him in the Convention and related resolutions of the General Assembly, including resolutions 49/28 and 52/26, to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea for the performance of such responsibilities under the approved budget for the Organization.

The reference to the financing of activities to be undertaken by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea runs counter to rule 153 of the General Assembly's rules of procedure, which clearly indicates the responsibility of the Fifth Committee in approving resolutions with budgetary implications.

The President returned to the Chair.

Similarly, operative paragraph 39 of resolution 55/7 ignores the current budgetary procedures, in particular the existence of a contingency fund of approximately $16 million, as noted in part VI of General Assembly resolution 54/251, which was earmarked precisely for the financing of additional activities during the biennium.

Operative paragraph 39 of resolution 55/7 reflects attempts to impose a zero-nominal-growth policy on the budget of this Organization. This policy has resulted in the introduction of instability and unpredictability in the work being done and the fulfilment of mandates by this Organization.

Mr. Wee (Singapore): Singapore voted in support of resolution 55/8, because we agree that it contains many useful and constructive elements that encourage

responsible fishing practices and sustainable fisheries-resources management.

However, Singapore would like to place on record its position on references contained in the resolution to certain agreements made by some regional fisheries arrangements. This is because the legal implications arising from them are not sufficiently clear. As we were not privy to the negotiations leading to these agreements, we cannot, without closer scrutiny, be in a position to judge what the parties intended by specific provisions of such agreements.

The adoption of resolution 55/8 today must be without prejudice to the requirement that both the terms of these agreements by regional fisheries arrangements and the way they are implemented must be consistent with the applicable principles of international law, in particular the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Mr. Seki (Japan): On resolution 55/8 on fisheries, which we have just adopted, we have all made efforts to achieve solutions to illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing, by-catches, discards and other outstanding problems. Japan agrees with the conclusions contained in the paragraphs on these matters.

However, in the second part of the fifth preambular paragraph and in other relevant preambular paragraphs, consensus was not achieved. Japan appreciates the fact that the Chairman of the informal negotiations on this resolution did everything possible to establish such a consensus, but since that has proved impossible at this time, Japan abstained in the voting.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 34?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 177

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

Note by the Secretary-General (A/55/433)

Draft decision (A/55/L.5)

The President: I give the floor to the Executive-Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization to introduce his report.

Mr. Hoffmann (Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization): This is the first occasion on which I have had the honour to address the General Assembly under the new agenda item "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization". At the outset, I should like to express my appreciation to all Member States for affording me this opportunity.

On 10 September 1996 the General Assembly adopted the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by 158 votes to 3 with 5 abstentions. With the adoption of the CTBT, one of the longest treaty negotiations in the history of arms control and disarmament was brought to a successful end.

A few months ago, on 15 June, the General Assembly adopted the Agreement to Regulate the Relationship between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. Article IV of the agreement provides that:

> "The Commission shall ... keep the United Nations informed of its activities, and may submit through the Secretary-General of the United Nations reports thereon on a regular or ad hoc basis to the principal organs of the United Nations concerned." (*resolution 54/280, annex, article IV, para. 1*)

My report on the work of the Preparatory Commission in 1999 has been circulated by the Secretary-General in document A/55/433. In my statement today I should like to inform the General Assembly about cooperation between the United Nations and the Commission, the Commission's recent activities to prepare for entry into force of the CTBT and the status of adherence to the Treaty.

With the adoption of the relationship Agreement, the Commission became a new member of the United Nations family. Although it remains an autonomous organization, the Commission wishes to contribute to the goals of the United Nations system, the success of

which is based on the complementary inputs of its many members. In implementation of the relationship agreement, the Commission will establish a liaison office at United Nations Headquarters with effect from tomorrow. This office will represent the interests of the Commission in New York and will serve those States signatories of the CTBT that are not represented in Vienna.

The relationship Agreement makes provision for the use of the United Nations laissez-passer by officials of the Commission, and we look forward to concluding the necessary implementing arrangement for this in the near future. In addition, the Agreement provides for close cooperation and coordination between the two Organizations. The Commission has consequently expressed its interest in participating in the work of the Administrative Committee on Coordination. An agreement is also being negotiated with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which will set out a framework for the UNDP to provide operational support services to the Commission.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty bans all nuclear test explosions, for military as well as for civilian purposes. It has assumed a pivotal role in the nuclear non-proliferation regime. While the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its verification regime address the proliferation of weapons-grade fissionable material, the CTBT and its verification regime focus on the prevention of explosive testing of nuclear devices. By putting an end to testing, the CTBT impedes the development of ever more sophisticated and qualitatively new nuclear weapons. The CTBT is expected to stop vertical as well as horizontal nuclear proliferation. Thus, the Treaty strengthens and enhances the process of nuclear disarmament.

Successful implementation of the CTBT depends on the effectiveness of its worldwide verification system so that each party can be assured that all other parties will adhere to the Treaty or at least that any violation of it will be detected. The International Monitoring System (IMS) is a network of 170 seismological, 60 infrasound, 11 hydroacoustic and 80 radionuclide stations, supported by 16 radionuclide laboratories. It will be capable of registering vibrations underground, in the sea and in the air, as well as detecting traces of radionuclides released into the atmosphere by a nuclear explosion. The stations will transmit a stream of data generated by these four complementary technologies, in near real time, via a global satellite communications system to the International Data Centre in Vienna, where all the data will be processed. All data, raw and processed, will be made available to States parties for their final analysis. Ambiguous events will be subject to consultation and clarification. As a final verification measure, an on-site inspection may be requested.

The global verification regime of the CTBT has to be operational at the Treaty's entry into force. I should now like to share with the Assembly what the Provisional Technical Secretariat has been doing to assist the Commission in establishing the regime. The Secretariat started work at the Vienna International Centre on 17 March 1997 with a very small staff of nine. After 42 months' existence, it has become a fully fledged international secretariat comprising 248 staff members from 70 countries. Since the focus of the Commission's responsibilities is technical, the majority of the staff members in the Professional category are scientists.

The Secretariat is building up the International Monitoring System according to a schedule of work determined by the Commission. To date, some $58 million have been budgeted for capital investment in the International Monitoring System. This covers the costs of site surveys necessary to select the most appropriate location for each station, the purchase and installation of equipment and the final certification of facilities. It represents approximately 40 per cent of the total capital investment required to complete the International Monitoring System. The Division working on this system has been working very hard to lay the groundwork for the network. To date about 60 per cent of the IMS site surveys have been completed, and approximately 20 per cent of the stations have been installed and are sending data to the International Data Centre. We are also paying special attention to the certification of IMS stations, and three IMS seismic stations — in Canada, Norway and the United States — have been certified.

Since 21 February 2000 the International Data Centre (IDC) has been sending IMS data and its products on a test basis to States signatories. Currently more than 40 States have submitted the information required to establish a secure signatory account, and they are able to access the data and products.

The core of our Global Communications Infrastructure (GCI) was put in place in 1999, when global satellite coverage was established with the installation of four GCI hubs and the infrastructure to link these hubs to the International Data Centre in Vienna. This year an additional hub was established. GCI satellite terminals have been installed at 37 IMS stations, national data centres and development sites.

In the area of on-site inspections, the Commission has made good progress in the elaboration of a draft on-site inspection operational manual, which is being treated as a priority task. Steady progress has also been made in the procurement of passive seismic equipment related to the Seismic Aftershock Monitoring System (SAMS), as well as of initial items of handheld low-resolution radionuclide survey equipment for testing purposes. The Secretariat has also initiated the process for the procurement of items related to still and video photography, visual observation and position finding.

Confidence-building measures, another element of the global verification regime, are of a voluntary nature. The Preparatory Commission has agreed to establish a database on chemical explosions for the purpose of creating the basic technical conditions for the implementation of confidence-building measures after the Treaty enters into force.

In accordance with article XIV, the Treaty will enter into force after it has been ratified by the 44 States listed in annex 2 to the Treaty. Another important aspect of the Commission's work is therefore to promote the signature and ratification of the CTBT.

I am pleased to report that since its opening for signature and ratification on 24 September 1996 the Treaty has been signed by 160 countries. To date, 66 countries have also ratified the Treaty; they include 30 of the 44 States listed in annex 2 to the Treaty whose ratification is needed for it to enter into force.

Following the article XIV Conference convened by the Secretary-General in October last year — the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT — members of the Preparatory Commission have continued to make serious efforts to sustain the momentum that the Conference created. To this end, a wide range of activities, in the form of coordinated and unilateral initiatives, has been undertaken to advance the universality of the Treaty and to promote its early entry into force.

The commitment of the international community to bring the Treaty into force was clearly reflected at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, which affirmed support for the CTBT and welcomed the final declaration adopted at the article XIV Conference. It is particularly significant that the NPT Review Conference agreed on the importance and urgency of signature and ratification, without delay and without conditions, and in accordance with constitutional processes, to achieve the early entry into force of the CTBT, as well as on a moratorium on nuclear-weapon-test explosions or any other nuclear explosions pending its entry into force.

The recent Millennium Summit, at which facilities were made available for States to sign and ratify multilateral treaties deposited with the Secretary-General, provided an excellent opportunity to promote adherence to the CTBT. I wish to express the appreciation of the Commission for the Secretary-General's initiative in this regard. During the Summit, five States signed the Treaty and two deposited their instruments of ratification.

Thus far, the brief history of the CTBT can be considered to be one of success: the international community firmly supports the Treaty; its Organization is well established; and even before its entry into force, the verification regime has proved itself a reliable and effective system. The early entry into force of the Treaty remains an important political challenge. I wish to take this opportunity to encourage all States to take the necessary steps to ensure that the CTBT enters into force soon, so that all the components of its verification regime can be brought into effect to make our world a safer and more secure place for generations to come.

The President: I call on the representative of Mexico to introduce the draft decision in document A/55/L.5.

Mr. Albin (Mexico) *(spoke in Spanish):* The Mexican delegation has the honour of introducing the draft decision in document A/55/L.5, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization".

The conclusion of a Treaty completely prohibiting nuclear tests was for many years a priority objective of Mexico's foreign policy. The Government of Mexico signed the Treaty convinced that the

cessation of testing would prevent qualitative improvements of nuclear weapons and put an end to the development of new types of nuclear weapons. This is an important step in the process of nuclear disarmament. Consistent with the great importance that Mexico attaches to the work of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), Mexico assumed the chair of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO during the second half of this year.

We believe that a closer relationship between the Preparatory Commission and the United Nations opens up possibilities of a broad agenda of cooperation. We must make the most of them. The active assistance of the United Nations will mean that the CTBTO will be able to carry out its mandate with the greatest efficiency and transparency.

The Agreement to Regulate the Relationship between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO, approved on 15 June 2000, states that, in accordance with the Charter, the United Nations is the principal Organization dealing with matters relating to international peace and security and acknowledges that the activities of the Commission performed pursuant to the Treaty will contribute to the realization of the purposes and principles of the Charter.

Through this Agreement, the United Nations and the Commission recognize the need to collaborate in order to achieve their common objectives, and, with a view to facilitating the effective exercise of their responsibilities, agree to cooperate closely, consult and maintain a close working relationship on matters of mutual interest and concern. To this end, the United Nations and the Commission have agreed to cooperate in accordance with the provisions of their respective constituent instruments, as underscored by Mr. Wolfgang Hoffmann, Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission, in his valuable presentation.

The Member States of the United Nations must support the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as an indispensable element in the framework supporting the multilateral nuclear disarmament agenda. We emphasize that in the Final Document of the last Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), all Member States are urged to continue to make every effort to ensure the early entry into force of the CTBT.

It is with this in mind that Mexico introduces the draft decision contained in document A/55/L.5, convinced that greater cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization will strengthen the United Nations and contribute to the objectives of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. We therefore hope that the draft decision will receive the broadest possible support from Member States and will be adopted without a vote.

Miss Aragon (Philippines): Our travel on the road to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has been interesting. We have had some bumps and turns, but we have remained true to our cause. A while back on that road we encountered what seemed to be an impassable roadblock. But we were able to prevent the CTBT text from becoming a mere fixture in the archives of the Conference on Disarmament and to breathe life into this text. In 1996, through the determined efforts of several States led by Australia and Mexico, the text made the trip from Geneva to New York.

In the years that followed, we actively sought to establish the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), while at the same time trying to bring universality to the Treaty. While the numbers have been encouraging, our efforts at universality had an extra challenge or another bump in the road — the ratification or accession of the rest of the 45 Annex 2 States. But we did go farther down the road when we met last year in Vienna for the Conference to facilitate the early entry into force of the CTBT. Under the able presidency of Mr. Masahiko Koumura of Japan, we reiterated our common commitment and desire to see the CTBT enter into force.

The end of the road is still far away, because for the Philippines that end is the total elimination of nuclear weapons. But more immediately, we must stay on the road towards the entry into force of the CTBT.

We are going in the right direction. This resolution is proof of that. Other proof is the gentleman who has been quietly organizing the CTBTO and who shared his thoughts with us this morning, Ambassador Wolfgang Hoffmann of Germany.

Even though we have not yet reached that milestone when we can celebrate the entry into force of the CTBT, today's decision is important and is one that I believe will bring us closer to that milestone.

The final nuclear tests of the last millennium were all conducted in our part of the world. It is the hope of my country that these tests were the last for all time.

The CTBT is an important part of our collective efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament. Taken together with the other steps we have taken, the CTBT is crucial in preventing proliferation and will put in place a verification system that we will one day need when agreement is finally reached on ridding the world of nuclear weapons.

Mr. President: I call on the representative of France speaking on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Bossiere (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to address this Assembly on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as Iceland a European Free Trade Association [EFTA] country that is a member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

Allow me first to say how delighted we are at the successful conclusion of the bilateral agreement between the United Nations and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). This gives the General Assembly an opportunity in plenary to deal with the progress made on achieving the early entry into force of the Treaty.

The importance and the urgency of continuing the process of signing and ratifying this Treaty in order to permit the speedy entry into force of the Treaty was recalled in the final document of the Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This is a priority of the European Union. No less than 160 States have signed this basic nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation instrument. We call upon all States that have not yet done so, particularly those that appear on the list of the 44 States whose ratification is necessary for the entry into force of the Treaty, to sign and ratify the CTBT as soon as possible. In this respect, we congratulate Bangladesh, Chile, Gabon, Iceland, Kiribati, Lithuania, the Maldives, Mexico, Morocco, the Russian Federation, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates on the ratification of the Treaty since the last session of the General Assembly.

All the European Union Member States, including those that appear on the list of the 44 States whose ratification is necessary for the entry into force of the Treaty, have signed and ratified the CTBT. The European Union has spared no effort to ensure the prompt entry into force of the Treaty and its universal scope. On 29 July 1999, the European Union adopted a common position in pursuit of these objectives. At the Conference held in Vienna last year, pursuant to article 14 of the CTBT, the countries that had signed and ratified the Treaty reaffirmed their resolve to work to ensure that the Treaty is ratified by all and rapidly entered into force.

The conclusion of the bilateral agreement between the United Nations and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization will make it possible for the Secretariat to establish the parameters of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO and to strengthen its activities in international forums. I wish to take this opportunity to express the European Union's hope that the draft agreement with the United Nations Development Programme will also be quickly concluded and that a draft will be submitted to the Preparatory Commission in due course.

The European Union pays tribute to the work done by the Executive Secretary and the entire Secretariat, as well by the Preparatory Commission. The European Union particularly acknowledges the progress made in installing the monitoring system. We hope that this momentum will continue and that every effort will be made to establish the stations. With respect to the programme budget, we welcome the information communicated to us by the Executive Secretary, according to which 91 per cent of contributions have already been paid. This confirms the high level of commitment of States.

The European Union hopes that the General Assembly will fully support the efforts made by the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. The Union hopes in particular that Member States will support the implementation of the bilateral agreement just concluded between the United Nations and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

Finally, the member States of the Union draw attention to the fact that they support the initiative to

convene another conference on article 14 of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in autumn 2001.

Mr. Luck (Australia): Allow me, through you, Mr. President, to extend my delegation's appreciation to the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), Mr. Wolfgang Hoffmann, for the report on the activities of the Preparatory Commission during 1999. We welcome the contribution this plenary item makes to a better understanding of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) among all States.

Completion of the CTBT negotiations, in September 1996, fulfilled a key objective identified by the Principles and Objectives of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as being important to the full realization and effective implementation of article VI of the NPT.

While it is disappointing that the CTBT is not yet formally in force, it is in provisional operation; and that is to be welcomed. With 160 signatories and 66 ratifications, and a growing verification infrastructure, the Treaty is firmly established as a powerful international norm against further nuclear testing. I agree very much with Mr. Hoffmann's remarks on that point.

Australia, which played a major role in bringing the Treaty to the United Nations General Assembly in 1996, will continue to work actively with other countries to secure early entry into force of the Treaty. We recently made a further round of diplomatic representations to countries of the Asia-Pacific region and to countries in the group of 44 States whose ratification is required for entry into force. Australia is also active in the Vienna process to organize a second CTBT article XIV conference on facilitating the Treaty's early entry into force. We were pleased to take the lead in introducing the CTBT draft resolution under consideration this year in the First Committee.

Progress in signatures and ratifications has made an important contribution to maintaining the strength and momentum of the Treaty. A further key factor has been the successful establishment of the CTBTO's Preparatory Commission and its Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) in Vienna. We should be in no doubt that the establishment of the Preparatory Commission was a landmark achievement for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The setting up of the Preparatory Commission and the significant financial investment inherent in its work send a powerful message to those still outside the CTBT that the global non-testing norm is here to stay.

The Treaty's International Monitoring System (IMS) is a major effort for the international community. When completed it will consist of 170 seismological, 60 infrasound, 11 hydroacoustic and 80 radionuclide stations supported by 16 radionuclide laboratories. A global communications infrastructure and an international data centre in Vienna will complete the IMS. Countries will also be establishing their own national data centres to enable them to reach conclusions about international compliance with the test ban. Obviously, this system requires a significant investment, but it is an investment fully justified by the security benefit of assurance of detection of nuclear-test explosions anywhere in the world.

We welcome the good progress made by the Preparatory Commission and the Provisional Technical Secretariat on establishing the International Monitoring System, and we look forward to further development of this and other aspects of CTBT verification so that the Treaty's verification system will be ready at entry into force. Obviously, the Preparatory Commission must continue to receive adequate resources in order to be able to maintain the necessary rate of progress.

Australia will host 21 IMS stations, the third largest number of stations in any country. We are pleased to report that work on these stations is at an advanced stage, with several stations already close to being certified as meeting CTBT standards. We encourage all countries hosting International Monitoring System stations to continue to work closely with the Preparatory Commission to ensure timely completion of their stations. Along with the System, the possibility of on-site inspections to investigate serious concerns about non-compliance is a fundamental element of CTBT verification. Agreement on effective and practical procedures for such inspections have proven more elusive than we might have hoped. We therefore look forward to the active contribution of all States signatories in the forthcoming elaboration process for the on-site inspection manual so that this document may be ready as soon as possible.

Australia has long recognized that a universal and verifiable ban on nuclear tests is an essential component of regional and international peace and security, and would be a decisive step towards the goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons. The wide support for the CTBT and the substantial progress made on the Treaty's verification show that a verifiable nuclear-test ban is now within sight of attainment. We take this opportunity to reiterate our appreciation for the work of the Preparatory Commission and to assure it of our continued strong support.

Mr. Smith (United States of America): My delegation would like to take this opportunity to express its support for the important work of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization in implementing the requirements of the Treaty. The United States has demonstrated that support through its active participation in the work of the Preparatory Commission.

The creation of an international verification regime, which is the prime task of the Preparatory Commission, will be a major step forward. That regime will include an International Monitoring System consisting of a global network of seismological, radionuclide and infrasound sensors, and an international data centre. It will play a key role in monitoring the Treaty.

The United States urges all countries that have signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to meet their obligations to support this effort.

Ms. Schneebauer (Austria): Austria fully supports the statement just made by France on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to thank Ambassador Hoffmann for his excellent report on the cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. Austria firmly believes that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is an important instrument in the effort to advance arms control and nuclear disarmament by banning all nuclear tests and other nuclear explosions.

We are pleased to note that since the Treaty was adopted by the General Assembly and opened for signature in September 1996, 160 States have signed and 66 have ratified it. Thirty of those countries are on the list of the 44 key States whose ratification is, according to article XIV of the CTBT, a prerequisite for the Treaty's entry into force. While we would have wished the ratification process to proceed more swiftly, we must remain realistic and take stock of what has already been achieved. We remain confident that in the course of the next month the number of signatory and ratifying States will steadily increase. We especially call upon the 14 key States to sign and ratify the Treaty so that it can enter into force before its fifth anniversary, in September 2001.

Let me also take this opportunity to express our high appreciation for the work accomplished over the past three and a half years by the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Preparatory Commission, under the able leadership of the Executive Secretary, Mr. Wolfgang Hoffmann. They are striving hard to set up the global verification system so that it will be fully functional at the time of the entry into force of the CTBT. Given the complexity of their tasks, much work still needs to be done to meet the requirements of the Treaty. In view of the remarkable progress achieved, I am confident that the remaining problems will be solved if both the Provisional Technical Secretariat and the members of the Preparatory Commission unite their efforts and their expertise.

Mr. Cheng Jingye (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish first of all to thank the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), Mr. Wolfgang Hoffmann, for his introduction of the work of that organization during the past year. The international community concluded the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) after a great deal of work and hard negotiations over many years. The Treaty constitutes an important step towards the goal of the complete prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons and is an important achievement in the arms control and disarmament sphere. It is of epoch-making significance in the process of nuclear disarmament. Since its adoption, it has been signed by 160 countries and ratified by more than 60, which shows that the international community supports and trusts the Treaty.

Over the past four years, preparations for the CTBTO have been proceeding apace, and a great deal of progress has been achieved. We pay tribute to Mr. Wolfgang Hoffmann, who heads the Provisional Technical Secretariat, for the positive contribution he made to the Treaty negotiations, and to all others who

are contributing to the work of the Preparatory Commission. The Commission has been assigned a noble task. It is playing an important role in the strengthening of international peace and security and in promoting the process of disarmament.

Enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and the CTBTO will strengthen the relationship between the two organizations, in turn making the international community more aware of the importance of the CTBTO and thus helping that organization better to fulfil its historic mission. Although important progress has been made in the preparatory work, we also note some problems. Some of the big Powers have refused to ratify the Treaty, which has a serious negative impact on its ultimate entry into force. There is still room for improvement in terms of universal participation in the preparatory process.

China has always favoured the complete prohibition and total elimination of nuclear weapons, and has always taken a positive approach to the CTBT. China was among the first to sign the Treaty and has played an active part in the preparatory work for the CTBTO. The Chinese Government has submitted the Treaty to the National People's Congress for ratification; that body will consider the question of ratification in line with my country's legal procedures.

We urge countries that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty to do so at an early date so that the Treaty can enter into force and can attain universality. We also hope that States parties will fully and faithfully meet their Treaty obligations so that the aims of the CTBT can be attained at an early date.

Mr. Cappagli (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): My thanks go to the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), Mr. Wolfgang Hoffmann, for his presentation.

The Argentine Government expresses its satisfaction at the Agreement to Regulate the Relationship between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. Argentina stresses its ongoing active commitment to the international community's goals of the complete prohibition of nuclear tests and of the creation of an international verification system through the International Data Centre. In that regard, in December 1999 my country signed an agreement with the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization on undertaking activities related to the Treaty's international monitoring facilities.

At the national level, Argentina has contributed to the design and installation of monitoring stations as part of the International Monitoring System. That reflects our goodwill and our readiness to facilitate the installation of such facilities.

My country stresses its political support for the entry into force of the Treaty. At the same time, we express our concern about increases in the budget of the CTBTO, which entails increased contributions by every country.

We wish to highlight the upcoming regional workshop on international cooperation and national implementation and ratification procedures, to take place at Lima, Peru, from 29 November to 1 December. It will provide an opportunity for an analysis of the international monitoring process, and will add further momentum towards the entry into force of the Treaty.

Mr. McDougall (Canada): This is a landmark occasion — the first time an Executive Secretary of the Provisional Technical Secretariat for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) has appeared before the General Assembly of the United Nations. Canada salutes the achievements of the organization and the leadership of Wolfgang Hoffmann. We also welcome the growing, mutually beneficial cooperation between the organization and the United Nations system.

The Canadian national statement to the First Committee this year noted that the CTBT has now been signed by 160 countries and ratified by 63; that there has been no testing for over two years; that the CTBTO's surveillance and verification network is under construction; that there is a de facto moratorium on testing in effect among the five nuclear-weapon States that is respected by all of them; and that the political cost of tests, the bar against any further demonstrations of weapons capable of human extinction, is surely higher than it has ever been and is rising.

Canada wants that political cost to be, and to be seen to be, simply prohibitive. We want the bar against tests to be decisive; we want no more tests ever again.

That is why we pressed for the Treaty's provision for sustained pressure for ratification, why we will join nations planning for a second conference, in accordance with the Treaty, here in New York next year, to promote early entry into force, and why we appeal directly to the 14 Governments whose required assent for entry into force is still outstanding.

The CTBTO's verification network heard the last nuclear tests on earth. It heard the explosions which sank the *Kursk* — may the souls of its crew rest in peace. We should make no mistake: big explosions, anywhere on earth, are no longer secret. Today's is a monitored moratorium on nuclear tests — something new and strong in the world.

The CTBTO is a vital part of the essential infrastructure for a world free from nuclear arms. We are pleased to have this occasion to hail its progress.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft decision A/55/L.5.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft decision A/55/L.5.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/55/L.5?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 177?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 24

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference

Report of the Secretary-General (A/55/368)

Draft resolution (A/55/L.17)

The President: I call on the representative of Malaysia to introduce draft resolution A/55/L.17.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): I wish at the outset to thank the Secretary-General for his report. Speaking in Malaysia's capacity as the current Chairman of the Islamic Group at the United Nations in New York, I am pleased to note that the Secretary-General's report on this item indicates a welcome deepening of relations between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) through high-level contacts, regular consultations and technical meetings.

The report notes that the OIC has participated actively in the meetings of the United Nations and its subsidiary organs and has entered into cooperation agreements with various United Nations subsidiary organs. We are gratified that the Secretary-General encourages the United Nations and the OIC to continue to strengthen their cooperation in view of the increasingly important role played by the OIC in the international arena, in particular with respect to the implementation of the objectives of the United Nations in the areas of security, disarmament, decolonization, human rights, economic development and technical cooperation.

The OIC, founded 31 years ago, aims to strengthen unity and solidarity among the Islamic community and to forge greater cooperation among its members, encompassing all areas. The OIC, which today comprises 56 member States and 4 observer States, covers a vast geographical area and a large population dispersed over four continents. It represents a rich diversity of cultures and political systems that share the common heritage of Islam. With the active support of its members, the Organization has been able to fulfil its role as an important international institution serving the cause of global peace and security and striving to work for a better future for the Muslim community and humanity as a whole.

In July this year the twenty-seventh session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The ICFM is the second main policy-making organ of the OIC, the first being the Islamic Summit Conference. The next summit meeting will be held in Doha, Qatar, from 12 to 14 November this year. The foreign ministers meeting in Kuala Lumpur considered international developments and their impact on the Islamic States with a view to defining common positions on global political and economic issues. They also reviewed the socio-economic situation in the Islamic world, as well as economic relations with non-member States. They took stock of the activities of Islamic institutions set up to expand economic and commercial cooperation among member States, and approved joint plans of action for the progress and social uplift of their peoples. The Kuala Lumpur meeting also discussed

cooperation in cultural matters among member States, with special attention to the promotion of Islamic civilization and culture, as well as to the needs of Islamic minorities in various parts of the world. Several resolutions were adopted at the Kuala Lumpur meeting, representing the positions of the Islamic community on matters pertaining to global peace and security, social justice, trade and development.

The foreign ministers also considered, as a major theme, the important issue of globalization, particularly the continuing unsatisfactory situation with regard to the globalization of trade and the crippling debt burden of the developing countries. They also considered the situation in Palestine and the Middle East, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Kashmir and Somalia, among other areas. It took a hard look at the structural distortions and discriminatory treatment that are currently undermining the international system, and made a number of constructive recommendations.

The OIC Foreign Ministers also meet annually at the United Nations in September to coordinate their positions on various issues on the United Nations agenda.

The OIC has amply demonstrated that it is an instrument in the service of peace, development and solidarity among the world's peoples. We are gratified that the United Nations Secretary-General has acknowledged the positive role played by the OIC and has long considered the Organization to be an important partner of the United Nations. The member States of the OIC firmly believe that the United Nations is well-placed to bridge the gap between the Islamic countries and the rest of the international community through its mechanisms of dialogue and cooperation.

Under agenda item, I have the honour, on behalf of the States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, to introduce draft resolution A/55/L.17. The preambular part of the draft resolution recalls the previous resolutions of the General Assembly and recognizes the cooperation between the two organizations, including that initiated by resolution 3369 (XXX) of 10 October 1975, by which the General Assembly decided to invite the OIC to participate in the sessions and the work of the Assembly in the capacity of observer. The draft resolution spells out the reasons for, as well as the benefits of, cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference in their endeavours to pursue their common ideals and goals — namely, the quest for peace and the promotion of genuine development for the benefit of all countries and peoples, as well as the promotion of human security.

A new preambular paragraph, the ninth, welcomes the results of the general meeting of the two organizations and their relevant agencies, subsidiary organs, and specialized and affiliated institutions, held in Vienna from 11 to 13 July 2000, pursuant to resolution 54/7, adopted last year.

Before elaborating on the operative paragraphs, I should like to make the following correction to operative paragraph 6, where "preventing" in the third line should be replaced by "preventive", so that the phrase will now read "in the field of peace-making and preventive diplomacy".

Let me now elaborate on the operative paragraphs. The draft resolution, inter alia, takes note with satisfaction of the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations; takes note of the conclusions and recommendations of the meeting of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and the OIC and its subsidiary institutions; notes with satisfaction the active participation of the OIC in the work of the United Nations towards the realization of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter; welcomes the strengthening of cooperation between the two organizations in areas of common concern, including in the field of peace-making and preventive diplomacy, and their close cooperation in their continuing search for peace and lasting solution to the conflict in Afghanistan; welcomes the increasing information exchange and coordination and periodic meetings between their two Secretaries-General and their officials to deepen further cooperation in priority areas of interest in the political, economic, social and cultural fields; expresses appreciation to the United Nations Secretary-General for his efforts in this regard, and urges the United Nations and its specialized agencies to provide increased technical and other forms of assistance to the OIC and its subsidiary agencies; and requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session on the state of cooperation between the two organizations.

I trust that the Assembly will fully support draft resolution A/55/L.17, which I submit on behalf of the

OIC member States for the Assembly's consideration and unanimous adoption.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) *(spoke in French)*: Consideration of the agenda item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference" is of special importance for my delegation, since it is a high point in our dialogue to define the framework of a mutually advantageous partnership in order to find the right collective responses to the many challenges facing both organizations.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) comprises some 50 member States, representing a fifth of the world's population, and this near-universality gives the OIC global duties and obligations. It is therefore natural that it shares the purposes and principles, as well as the concerns, of the United Nations, which explains the importance that the States members of the OIC, which are also Members of the United Nations, attach to strengthening, expanding and deepening cooperation between the two organizations. Over the years this cooperation has reached the point of becoming a living reality encompassing complementary activities in our quest for solutions to crises and conflicts that beset the Islamic Ummah in broad areas, such as development, the environment, refugees and the dialogue among civilizations.

One priority of the OIC, clearly, is to find solutions to crises that beset certain countries or regions and are of great concern to the international community. Whether the crisis concerns the problem of the Middle East, and more specifically the question of Palestine, which was the reason for the creation of the OIC, or the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Somalia, Jammu and Kashmir, Afghanistan or Sierra Leone, the Organization of the Islamic Conference is deeply committed to finding a lasting political solution, working hand in hand with the United Nations.

Among these crises, the question of Palestine is today of the highest priority. My country, Senegal, which holds the chairmanship of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and which is also a member of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices in the Occupied Arab Territories, can attest to the vitality of the relationship and the pre-eminent role of the OIC and the United Nations in finding a satisfactory solution to this central question of the Israeli-Arab conflict.

Recently, following the provocative visit paid to the Al-Haram Al-Sharif sanctuary by Mr. Ariel Sharon, the head of the Likud Party, and following the deadly violence that this visit triggered in the occupied Palestinian territories, both organizations worked in close cooperation to resume the tenth emergency special session in order to explore and implement ways to reduce tension and put the peace process back on track.

The Special Committee on Palestine, which I chair, has also reacted to these events by adopting, at the meeting held on 10 October, a declaration that reaffirmed the ongoing responsibility of the United Nations for all aspects of the settlement of the question of Palestine, including Jerusalem, in accordance with the agreements, the relevant resolutions and international law.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) extends also to the promotion of international peace and security in conflict zones, particularly in Afghanistan, Somalia, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Jammu and Kashmir and, more recently, in Kosovo and Sierra Leone. In these various crises, the member States of the OIC have associated their initiatives with those of the United Nations in order to restore peace, provide humanitarian assistance and help in the post-conflict peace-building.

It is within the context of this cooperation that the two organizations continue above all to harmonize their activities so as to implement the 10 priorities defined by the recent general meeting of representatives of the secretariats of United Nations and OIC bodies and agencies. This meeting was held in Vienna from 11 to 13 July 2000, pursuant to Assembly resolution 54/7. These priorities include science and technology, trade and development, assistance to refugees, food security and agriculture, education, human resources, the environment, health and population. This expanded, multiform and diversified cooperation might even provide a model for the expansion of relations between the United Nations and other organizations.

I remain convinced that following the ninth summit of the OIC to be held next month in the fraternal country of Qatar, cooperation between the

OIC and the United Nations will make further progress, in an international context in which both of these international organizations will be increasingly called upon to promote the well-being of the peoples of their member States.

In conclusion I wish to stress that today's world is facing many serious challenges, and, in order to address them, the resolve and combined efforts of the various actors in international affairs are required. Cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC is definitely one way of meeting those challenges and of establishing the bases for peace and development in the world.

For these reasons, my delegation calls for the adoption, by consensus, of draft resolution A/55/L.17 that is before us.

I cannot conclude this statement without conveying heartfelt congratulations to my brother, His Excellency Mr. Mokhtar Lamani, for the outstanding work he does to strengthen cooperation between the OIC and the United Nations, for the pre-eminent role he plays and for the devotion he has shown to the Islamic Ummah.

Mr. Al-Heid (Saudi Arabia) *(spoke in Arabic)*: Today we are discussing the agenda item on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). The report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/55/368, which is before us, sheds light on the cooperation between the two organizations. In this context I would like to extend my profound gratitude to His Excellency, the Secretary-General, for his report.

The developments that have taken place in the area of cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC at various levels during the past period, as reviewed by the Secretary-General's report, confirm the belief of the representatives of the two organizations in the scope of their cooperation, their commitment to international and regional causes and their shouldering of responsibilities. The Government of Saudi Arabia welcomes the continuing consultations between the representatives of the United Nations and the OIC. Carried out through the meetings of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the OIC, these consultations review all matters of great importance in the political, economic and cultural fields and all matters of great interest to the member States of the two organizations. In addition, we believe that the various mechanisms for these consultations are the right channels for conveying the concerns of the member States of the OIC, so as to find solutions to common issues such as peace, disarmament, self-determination, the question of Palestine, the questions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Somalia, and other issues relating to global peace and security that require intensifying the efforts of the two organizations, on the one hand, and those of the international community on the other.

While cooperation is important in the political field, it is also important in the fields of social and economic development. The report of the Secretary-General reviews the meetings of the United Nations and the OIC and provides a summary of the participation that the OIC would like to see from the various organizations in the United Nations system, in particular from the United Nations main specialized agencies. In order to guarantee that the peoples of the member States of the OIC reach a technical level that allows them to keep up with recent developments while remaining true to the tolerant teachings of Islam, the OIC wishes to increase this cooperation, particularly in the fields of agriculture, industry, finance and scientific and technical know-how.

In this context I would like to pay tribute to the constructive role that member States of the OIC have played in the efforts to increase and develop cooperation among them, in order to make further progress in development and to establish a more just economic system. In addition, these member States have made a special effort to exchange experiences and coordinate their positions so as to achieve the main goals of peace, security and justice, in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

In conclusion my delegation would like to launch an appeal to the host country to take a positive approach and treat the mission of the OIC in New York on the same and equal footing as other observer missions, so that it may carry out its work of increasing cooperation between the United Nations and other regional organizations.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): The General Assembly is today reviewing the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in promoting their shared goals of international peace, security and development.

We note with satisfaction that the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference have maintained close coordination during the past year on important political issues, including the question of the Middle East and of Palestine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, the situation in Afghanistan, Somalia and the situation relating to Nagorny Karabakh.

Periodic dialogue at the level of the Secretaries-General of the two organizations on peacemaking efforts in the Middle East, Kosovo and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is an important step forward.

On Afghanistan, joint initiatives by the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference have been extremely useful in promoting the prospects of a lasting solution to the conflict. Cooperation on this issue must be further strengthened.

There is now a need for sustained and effective cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference towards resolving some of the most protracted conflicts. The Jammu and Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan is one of them. Unfortunately, no progress has been registered on this issue despite the fact that it remains on the agendas of both organizations and has the potential of endangering global peace and security.

It is a matter of satisfaction that cooperation between the United Nations system and the Organization of the Islamic Conference is expanding on a wide range of socio-economic issues. These include science and technology, trade and development, technical cooperation among Islamic countries, assistance to refugees, food security and agriculture, education and eradication of illiteracy, investment mechanisms and joint ventures, human resource development, environment, health and population, and development of arts and crafts and promotion of heritage. Efforts should be made to diversify cooperation in these and other related fields for the collective benefit of the Member States.

In our statements on the subject during the last two years, we have been expressing concern over the fact that the Permanent Observer Mission of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which has been functioning in New York for more than two decades, has not been accorded formal recognition by the host Government. Despite the concerns expressed by a large number of delegations, very little progress has been achieved in this regard, which hampers the organization's effective functioning, which includes matters pertaining to cooperation and coordination with the United Nations and its agencies. We once again urge the host Government to accord the OIC Observer Mission the necessary privileges and immunities, as envisaged in Article 105 of the United Nations Charter and the relevant provisions of the United Nations Headquarters Agreement with the host country. This need has been recognized by the Government of Switzerland, as it has accorded the necessary privileges and immunities to the OIC Observer Mission in Geneva, facilitating its interaction with the United Nations and the specialized agencies based in that country.

In conclusion, I would like to express our confidence that cooperation between the United Nations system and the Organization of the Islamic Conference will continue to grow in the years ahead. For its part, Pakistan will continue to contribute towards promoting greater cooperation and coordination between these two organizations.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): At the outset, I would like to commend the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) for their commitment to the cooperation between the two organizations and their efforts to extend it to new fields of common interest. We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC.

As the problems that we all must confront have become more global, the importance of multilateral negotiations and agreements has increased. This is also the case for the role of regional organizations. Norway believes that these organizations constitute an important tool for promoting the principles of the United Nations. We consider the Organization of the Islamic Conference a vital partner for the United Nations because of its broad regional influence. We also recognize that the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference reaches far beyond the Islamic world.

Norway fully supports the cooperation between the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the United Nations in their common search for solutions to global problems related to international peace and security, disarmament, self-determination,

decolonization, fundamental human rights and economic, social and technical development.

We welcome the increasing efforts being made by the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to promote international peace and security. Noting the positive developments in the Maghreb, we encourage the two organizations to continue strengthening cooperation in the field of peacemaking and preventive diplomacy. The periodic high-level meetings between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and the regular contact, at the level of the Department of Political Affairs and the Permanent Observer Mission of the OIC to the United Nations, are important in this regard.

We particularly encourage the United Nations and the OIC to renew their efforts to seek a negotiated solution to the conflict in Afghanistan. Two rounds of indirect talks with the United Front and the Taliban were convened earlier this year by the OIC's Committee for Afghanistan. They were chaired by the Islamic Republic of Iran and were a commendable initiative. Those meetings, held in Jeddah at the headquarters of the OIC, constitute an important contribution to the work for peace and stability in the region.

Norway also encourages cooperation between the OIC and the United Nations in the Balkans.

Cooperation between specialized agencies of the United Nations and the OIC and its subsidiary bodies and specialized and affiliated institutions serves to extend dialogue to new areas. We are pleased to note that a general meeting on cooperation between representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations system and the OIC and its specialized institutions was held in Vienna in July of this year. This meeting also considered proposals for enhancing the mechanisms of cooperation between the United Nations system and OIC and its institutions. We note that there are cooperation and information exchanges between United Nations agencies, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization and the World Health Organization, and the OIC with a view to enhancing social and economic development.

The memorandum of understanding signed by the United Nations Population Fund and the OIC on 2 October 1998 constituted an important follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo. We welcome the steps taken towards further implementation of the Programme of Action, especially with regard to Islam and reproductive health, Islam and the status of women, and Islam and population and development.

Norway notes with appreciation that agencies of the United Nations, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the High Commissioner for Refugees, are working together with the OIC in areas of common interest. We are also aware of the cooperation between the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the OIC. We encourage such dialogues.

The Islamic commentaries on the Universal Declaration are a valuable contribution to a mutual understanding of our joint commitment. Let me also take this opportunity not just to stress the importance of freedom of religion and belief, but also to highlight the role that religious communities can play — also at the non-governmental level — in seeking solutions to conflict. The Oslo Coalition, established in accordance with the mandate of the Oslo Conference on Freedom of Religion and Belief, is working together with religious and confessional groups to pursue this agenda.

Let me call attention to two further issues: women's rights and the right to education. As Norway stated at the Cairo Conference, women's education is the single most important path to higher economic growth and lower infant mortality. We are pleased to note that the education of girls and women is now included in the cooperation programmes between a large number of United Nations and OIC institutions and agencies.

In closing, Norway wishes again to express its appreciation for the commitment of the United Nations and the OIC in developing the cooperation between the two organizations. We hope that this working relationship will be developed further in the years to come.

Mr. Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, allow me to convey my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for the comprehensive and informative report entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference", contained in document A/55/368.

This report gives evidence that, during the past decade, the process of consultation and cooperation between the two organizations in their common search for solutions to world crises in various areas — international peace and security, peacemaking efforts, disarmament, self-determination and fundamental human rights — has been constantly strengthened.

Among major issues of mutual concern to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the United Nations, the following, for my delegation, stand out most prominently and I would like to touch upon them.

War and fratricide in Afghanistan have persisted for more than two decades. The Islamic Republic of Iran has suffered more than any other country from the adverse consequences of chaos and instability in Afghanistan. Obviously, a joint effort aimed at resolving the continued crisis in Afghanistan is one of the priorities of the OIC that also figures notably on the agenda of the United Nations.

In this respect, the initiative of the Chairman of the eighth OIC Summit, President Khatami of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in bringing warring Afghan parties to the negotiating table, has provided yet another opportunity to both organizations to act jointly with a view to putting an end to the protracted conflict in Afghanistan. The OIC Committee for Afghanistan, in a meeting with the Secretary-General of the United Nations in March 2000, emphasized, among other things, the central role of the United Nations in dealing with the Afghan crisis and the need for the OIC to play a complementary role in an effort to use, in an efficient manner, the potentials of the Islamic world in order to end the sufferings of the Afghan people. Authorized by the Secretary-General, his Personal Representative played an active role in conducting the first and second round of negotiations between the two Afghan parties at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. We hope that the continuation of close cooperation and coordination, worked out between the two Organizations, results in bringing about peace in Afghanistan.

The OIC has played a major role in promoting the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. The draft global agenda on dialogue among civilizations, which was adopted by the twenty-seventh session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in June 2000, provides a propitious basis for the OIC member States to begin negotiating with other groups within the United Nations in order to facilitate its adoption next year. Meanwhile, the OIC ad hoc committee on dialogue among civilizations, chaired by the Islamic Republic of Iran, held two meetings at United Nations headquarters on 19 September and 17 October 2000. The ad hoc committee also assisted in developing the draft resolution on the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. The consideration of this draft resolution by the General Assembly is scheduled for 13 November 2000.

The question of stability and peace in the Middle East through full restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people, including the rights of self-determination, return of refugees to their homes and the establishment of a sovereign State of Palestine, is still a matter of high priority and major concern on the agendas of both organizations. In this regard, my Government strongly believes that the continuing consultations and cooperation between the two organizations could contribute to the full realization of the Palestinians' rights and the restoration of a just and genuine peace and long-lasting security in the region.

Fortunately, during the past two years, new avenues for a better and strengthened cooperation between the OIC and the United Nations system have been explored. Significant progress in this field has been made through widespread cooperation between the OIC and its subsidiary bodies and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The two organizations have jointly planned, financed and implemented activities in the eradication of poverty, basic education — especially girl's education — capacity-building in the field of information, communications technology and cultural heritage. UNESCO and the OIC are preparing jointly to organize the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations and the issue of cultural dialogue in the year 2001. My delegation looks forward to the same achievements in cooperation between the OIC and the other pertinent specialized agencies, organizations, programmes and departments of the United Nations.

Undoubtedly, the issues of common interest to the two organizations could not be confined to what I have attempted to elaborate here. There exist more areas of common interest that need to be further developed. We are confident that draft resolution A/55/L.17, introduced by the Ambassador of Malaysia, serves as

another basis for promoting in the coming year joint activities which fall within the common purpose of both organizations, whose goals are to ensure international cooperation in seeking solutions to international economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems.

In the last month of the three-year tenure of the Islamic Republic of Iran as the Chair of the Eighth Summit of the OIC, I would like to express my country's deep gratitude and appreciation to both the Secretariat of the United Nations and the Permanent Observer Mission of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations, particularly Ambassador Lamani, for their tireless efforts and the commendable job they did in close cooperation and coordination with my delegation, as well as holding various meetings of the OIC.

Mr. Alkhal (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me pleasure to address the General Assembly on agenda item 24, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference". I wish to thank you, Sir, for guiding the work of the Assembly ably and with diplomatic tact.

It has been proved that cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations is of great importance in international affairs. Since its creation the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) has been an important and irreplaceable forum for cooperation and solidarity among its member States. We are convinced that the OIC will gain an effective role in international affairs with time.

The OIC is one of the largest regional organizations which can contribute to the work of the United Nations and can play an effective role in the political, economic, social, cultural and technical fields. International problems that are of interest to the two organizations, such as international peace and security, disarmament, the right to self-determination, decolonization, basic human rights and economic and technological development, are all areas in which both organizations can make progress. Among its members, the OIC has many people living in various continents of the world within an enormous geographical area. The common denominator among its members is culture, heritage and common interests. Our organization now has great political expertise due to the diversity of our culture and the heritage of our membership. That is why our organization could be an important and effective instrument for peace, stability and security throughout the world.

On 10 October 1975 the United Nations decided to invite the OIC to participate as an observer in its sessions and in its subsidiary bodies. That is why the agenda item now before us for consideration was included for the first time on the agenda of the thirty-fifth General Assembly session in 1980. Given the importance of this cooperation, the General Assembly considered this item and has done so every session since then. This attests to the benefit of this cooperation for us all in order to try to attain our common ideals and principles: to see a better world; build economic development among all peoples of the world; provide for collective security and strengthen this security; and try to implement Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, which deals with the role of regional organizations in the area of international peace and security and stability.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on this item, in which he encourages the OIC to continue its cooperation with the United Nations in international affairs. To make this cooperation consistent and effective, Qatar welcomes periodic high-level contacts between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary General of the OIC. We also welcome bilateral contacts between the two organizations at all levels. I do not need to provide further clarifications about this aspect — my delegation is convinced that the General Assembly will be able to give total support to the draft resolution on this item. I appeal to Member States of the United Nations to adopt it by consensus as proof of solidarity with the Muslim world.

It gives me pleasure to recall that Qatar will be hosting the Ninth Islamic Summit, in Doha from 12 to 14 November 2000. We take this opportunity to welcome to the Presidents of the Islamic States in their second homeland. We are convinced of the increasing role that can be played by our Islamic organization in cooperation with the United Nations in order to implement resolutions on peace and security and development, and to find solutions for problems in Asia and Africa, including the problem of Afghanistan, that could benefit from our presence. May God guide us at that Conference to give impetus to our joint Islamic endeavours to resolve problems such as that of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, which at present threatens world peace and security.

Mr. Patricio (Mozambique), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. We find the report comprehensive and structured to reflect the essence of the cooperation between the two organizations.

The Bangladesh delegation fully supports the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). We are encouraged to see that it has grown from strength to strength and expanded into the vital areas of peacemaking and conflict resolution, as well as being in the realms of crucial issues of socio-economic development. We are particularly happy that the rich experience of the United Nations has been employed in the common search for solutions to global problems.

Bangladesh strongly believes that peace and development should go hand in hand. Today, conflict resolution is increasingly approached through cooperation with organizations that are relevant and hold important stakes at both the international and regional levels. We are enthused by the ongoing consultations between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) on peacemaking efforts relating to the situation in Afghanistan, the Middle East, Kosovo and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The visible role of this cooperation in Afghanistan is to our satisfaction and we sincerely wish it success.

We are happy to endorse the agreement on the 10 priority areas of cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC and its specialized institutions. The setting up of joint working groups is the appropriate way to discuss the issues, and we are heartened to note that the general meeting of the United Nations system and the OIC and their specialized institutions have succeeded in reaching agreement on wide-ranging programmes of cooperative activities for the period 2000 and 2001. We would appreciate it if a full progress report on these programme activities could be prepared for our consideration in future. We wish to underscore that, as a guiding principle, such programmes should be drawn up in a way that they benefit the highest number of people of the OIC countries.

While we support the cooperative activities in all the identified areas, we would like to limit our comments to only a few.

International trade remains an important engine of growth in the age of globalization. We believe that expanding trading opportunities through increased market access for export of goods from developing countries and improving their supply capacity are important areas for consideration in sectoral meetings in priority areas of cooperation.

Bangladesh believes that capacity-building in science and technology in developing countries should continue to be a priority issue. In this regard, we note with satisfaction the identified programmes in the common sphere of activities of the United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO). We would like to emphasize the vast scope for expansion of scientific and technological cooperation among the OIC member States, which may be taken into account while elaborating projects in future.

We also recognize the growing scope of technical cooperation among the developing counties. Relevant organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and of the OIC should contribute to the transfer of technology and capacity building in the relevant fields.

We commend the OIC's ongoing cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) epitomized by the signing of the memorandum of understanding for cooperation. Bangladesh attaches high importance to the activities relating to the development of a model curriculum for population education, training and workshops in the OIC countries. We also believe that there should be more exchanges among the OIC countries in the field of population and reproductive health. Recent successes in some of the OIC member States could be emulated in others through appropriate programmes, with technical and financial assistance from the United Nations system.

Before closing, allow me to make a few remarks on the issue of poverty eradication, to which Bangladesh always attaches very high importance. The poverty situation in many of the OIC countries remains a cause for concern. We have come to accept today that in fighting poverty there is a need for a broader and

comprehensive strategy at the local, national and international levels. Given the magnitude of the problem, the most sensible approach would be to coordinate action among the actors, both governmental and non-governmental, at all levels. Some non-governmental organizations have received worldwide acclaim for their work in eradicating poverty in a number of countries. Valuable experience such as this is worth sharing through joint programmes of the United Nations and the OIC.

Bangladesh wholeheartedly supports the draft resolution on this subject contained in document A/55/L.17, and will support its consensus adoption.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3369 (XXX) of 10 October 1975, I now call on the observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Mr. Lamani (Organization of the Islamic Conference): I welcome the opportunity, and consider it a privilege, to address the General Assembly on agenda item 24, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference". A review of the status of cooperation between our two organizations has now become a regular feature of the deliberations of the annual sessions of this body. I bring the Assembly greetings from Mr. Laraki, Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), and his best wishes for the success of all its endeavours at this session.

Since this is the first time that the OIC has addressed the plenary of the General Assembly at its present session, I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, and through you, your colleagues in the Bureau, on your election to your high offices. I know that under your capable hands, Sir, the work of the Assembly will be very ably directed. I also join other delegations in paying tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab.

We have read with interest the report of the Secretary General, contained in document A/55/368. We commend the Secretariat for its part in the preparation of the report, which, as before, includes contributions from other organizations of the United Nations system. The report in large part details the status of implementation of programmes and activities in priority areas of cooperation jointly developed by our two organizations and by our respective specialized agencies and institutions during the period under review. The progress of implementation, as reported, is encouraging and, with regard to the OIC and its specialized and affiliated institutions, I assure the Assembly of our collective and continued enthusiasm and dedication to the tasks that are being jointly pursued.

Without in any way belittling the relevance or importance of the report, we note, however, that some United Nations agencies have considered it useful to take advantage of the opportunity to describe their activities with the OIC and its institutions undertaken in years prior to the period under review, and that a few have gone on to report on their regular activities in OIC member States outside of the scope of the United Nations/OIC cooperation framework. I express the hope that, in the interest of clarity and accuracy, the agencies concerned will find it desirable to report on actual activities undertaken with the OIC and its institutions and implemented during the periods under review. With this observation, I once again express my appreciation to the Secretariat for the useful and informative material presented in the report.

Ambassador Hasmy Agam, Permanent Representative of Malaysia, in his capacity as Chairman of the Islamic Group, has graciously introduced the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. It is before the Assembly in document A/55/L.17. I take the liberty of drawing attention to three of the thirteen operative paragraphs, because of their significance.

First, operative paragraph 4 requests our two organizations to:

> "continue to cooperate in their common search for solutions to global problems, such as questions relating to international peace and security, disarmament, self-determination, decolonization, fundamental human rights, social and economic development and technical cooperation".

In compliance with the Assembly's resolutions in previous years, contacts and interactions between the United Nations and the OIC have been maintained, and they will continue to be strengthened through the Islamic Group and a number of OIC contact groups and committees at the United Nations. The Permanent Observer Missions of the OIC to the United Nations in New York and in Geneva are actively participating in

the work of the General Assembly and other United Nations organs in the capacity of observers and are serving as channels of communication and consultation between the United Nations and the OIC and its specialized and affiliated institutions in all matters of our common concern. We look forward to further strengthening this cooperation in the future.

Secondly, operative paragraph 6 refers in the latter part to the close cooperation between the two organizations in continuing to search for a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in Afghanistan. As the Secretary-General's report reflects in paragraph 6, recent developments on the issue involved an OIC initiative to convene two rounds of indirect talks with the United Front and the Taliban at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah, with the participation of Mr. Francesc Vendrell, the Secretary-General's Personal Representative for Afghanistan. The efforts of the OIC regarding Afghanistan will continue to be complementary to and in support of the central role of the United Nations until such time as a peaceful and credible resolution of the Afghan conflict is reached.

Thirdly, operative paragraph 11 focuses on cooperation and coordination between the two organizations in the political, economic, social and cultural fields. Encompassing these fields are the current complementary roles of our two organizations in promoting a dialogue among civilizations. The idea was initiated within the framework of the OIC, which is collaborating with the United Nations in commemorating 2001 as the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. We express the hope that these efforts will lead to better understanding among peoples of different cultures, ethnicity and religions in all countries of the world.

At this stage I draw attention to the fact that none of the operative paragraphs in the draft resolution have additional financial implications, so I express the hope that it will attract the General Assembly's unanimous approval.

Before closing, I wish to take the liberty of speaking of the forthcoming change of executive heads in an important subsidiary organ of the General Assembly — the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), with which the OIC and some of its specialized and affiliated institutions have enjoyed fruitful collaboration. We salute the outgoing Executive Director, Dr. Nafis Sadik, for her superior abilities, leadership and invaluable contribution to the development of the Fund and especially for her unstinting support of the OIC and UNFPA cooperation in areas of common interest. We wish her a pleasant and well-deserved retirement and a long life full of happy memories, success and fulfilment in all her future pursuits and undertakings.

We are gratified that in Ms. Thoraya Obaid, the Executive Director designate, the Secretary-General has identified a lady of great professional competence. Ms. Obaid's support of OIC-UNFPA cooperation is well known, and we express the hope that this cooperation will be further enhanced during her tenure of office. It is equally gratifying to note that both the outgoing and incoming Executive Directors are from OIC member States, so their achievements have not only spelled pride and delight for Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, but have also brought honour to the OIC, and we are delighted and grateful.

I would conclude on a note of hope and expectation about future cooperation between our two organizations in all areas in which the best interests of our common member States can be served. We are both embarked on the journey to peace and progress, and we must continue to be guided by those very considerations and principles that have characterized our past collaboration and that will be needed even more for our future destination: the global village of the new millennium.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.17.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/55/L.17?

Draft resolution A/55/L.17 was adopted (resolution 55/9).

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Armenia for an explanation of position after adoption of the draft resolution. I remind delegations that such explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Akopian (Armenia): Armenia joined the consensus on the draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the

Islamic Conference", since we regard the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) as one of the most important and influential international organizations, created to apply the great humanistic values revealed in the Holy Koran to the political realities of today. The OIC has proved to be entirely dedicated to the principles of the United Nations Charter, and it is no surprise that it is highly respected by the international community and that its voice is always listened to attentively.

Since the report of the Secretary-General mentions in paragraph 3 the problem of Nagorny Karabakh, I would like to share some concerns in this regard. For nearly a decade the OIC has been addressing the issue of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, adopting resolutions on the matter. Of course, the OIC is free to consider any issue that affects the interest of a member State. But it becomes more and more obvious that those who introduce this issue into the OIC agenda and propose unbalanced and one-sided resolutions thus try to present the conflict also as a religious one between Christian Armenia and Muslim Azerbaijan, whereas in reality the true and only nature of the conflict is in depriving a people under alien domination of its legitimate right of self-determination, the right of which the OIC is a longtime supporter. As for the Armenian side, it has always refrained from using the religious factor, considering it unacceptable to exploit religion for purely political reasons. Such a step will only aggravate the situation, giving it a completely different and extremely dangerous dimension.

The OIC is an organization in which Armenia cannot present its position and defend its case. But we know that the overwhelming majority of the OIC member States do not have full information about and complete understanding of the conflict and have to rely on whatever is presented by interested sides. Several years ago we invited the OIC Secretary General to visit Armenia and Nagorny Karabakh or to send a delegation on his behalf to get an idea also about our vision of the conflict. Unfortunately, that never happened. Had it happened, not only would the OIC resolutions have had more balanced and tolerant language, but probably the OIC itself would have engaged more positively and would have helped to create an atmosphere of mutual confidence between the conflicting sides.

The Holy Koran says that the Almighty created different nations so that they might know each other. The President of Iran has developed that profound and meaningful Koranic verse into the great idea of a dialogue among civilizations. That idea has been welcomed and supported by the United Nations. It is our sincere wish to see the region of the southern Caucasus, where two great civilizations meet, be a good example of that dialogue. We believe that the Organization of the Islamic Conference will help turn that wish into reality.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position after the adoption of the draft resolution.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 24?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 25

Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/55/401)

Draft resolution A/55/L.18

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Iraq to introduce draft resolution A/55/L.18.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): In my capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of October, I would like on behalf of the Arab delegations that are members of the League of Arab States (LAS) to introduce draft resolution A/55/L.18 under item 25 of our agenda, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States".

The League of Arab States was established at the same time as the United Nations, in March 1945. We are proud of the close links that exist between the United Nations and the League of Arab States, which represent a tangible example of the cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations referred to in Chapter VIII of the Charter. Such relations and links have developed positively since the General Assembly adopted a consensus decision at its forty-eighth session to ensure cooperation between the two organizations. This relationship covers widely varying kinds of joint cooperation.

In the two organizations we examine issues related to international peace and security. Given the current events taking place in the occupied Arab territories, there is real need to enhance our cooperation and to strengthen the participation of the United Nations so that it may play an effective role in ending the aggression perpetrated by the racist forces of the Israeli occupiers against the Palestinian people. Similarly, there is an urgent need to enhance cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States in economic, social and development areas so there can be greater development in Arab countries and so we can achieve the shared goals of the two organizations.

The preamble of the draft resolution before us contains paragraphs that emphasize the desire of both organizations to consolidate the bonds of cooperation between them in all areas and to enhance that cooperation for the purpose of achieving the goals of both organizations.

In operative paragraph 3 the draft resolution expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for the follow-up action taken by him to implement the proposals adopted at the meetings between representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations.

The draft resolution also calls for continued efforts to enhance cooperation in the political, economic, social, humanitarian, cultural and administrative fields.

The draft resolution reaffirms the importance of holding the next general meeting on cooperation between the representatives of the secretariats of organizations of the United Nations system and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations during 2001.

In conclusion I would like, on behalf of the League of Arab States, to call upon the General Assembly — which is representative of the international community — to support cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States. We ask that the draft resolution be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 477 (V), of 1 November 1950, I now call on the Observer for the League of Arab States.

Mr. Hassouna (League of Arab States) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, at the outset, to express to the President our sincere congratulations on his election to the presidency of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

A few days ago, the world observed the fifty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations on 24 October 1945. That anniversary recalls the expectations and hopes placed in the Organization by the peoples of the world. At the same time, it highlights the huge gap between the state of affairs existing at the time the Organization was established and the current circumstances at the beginning of a new millennium that presents new and serious threats. As the first regional organization established in 1945 under the new world order imposed by the Second World War, the League of Arab States now enters the new millennium, while welcoming its growing role as a partner of the United Nations in various administrative, legal, cultural, social, economic and political areas.

We consider the United Nations as a melting pot in which all regional and international efforts coalesce to realize mankind's hopes and ambitions. The League of Arab States has always expressed its keen interest in consolidating its cooperation and in coordinating its activities with the United Nations in order to find solutions to questions relating to peace, security and development. The legal frame of reference for that cooperation is found not only in the provisions of the respective charters of the two organizations, but also in a new frame of reference provided by the reaffirmation, in the Millennium Declaration of 8 September 2000, of the need to promote cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in accordance with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

I turn now to areas of cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States. Here, I pay particular tribute to the Secretary-General for the comprehensive way in which his report (A/55/401) covers the cooperation that has taken place since the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. The report outlines consultations and exchanges of information between the two organizations at various levels, and follow-up action on proposals agreed to at general meetings between organizations of the United

Nations system and the League of Arab States. In that connection, I stress the importance of continued consultations between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of the League of Arab States on a variety of Arab and international questions. This has contributed to the containment and settlement of a number of crises.

I also hail the productive cooperation between the League of Arab States and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) since the signing on 22 September 1999 of a cooperation agreement between the League and UNDP and the implementation of that agreement in the field of public administration and in the social, economic, environmental, cultural, information and human development areas.

Among the most important instances of cooperation between the two organizations during the period under review was the May 2000 sectoral meeting on youth and employment between the United Nations and the League of Arab States. The outcome of that meeting has both social and economic implications for the Arab region. I wish also to note that the League of Arab States and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) have jointly organized and convened a number of successful regional meetings, notably several relating to the question of Arab women. The importance that the League of Arab States attaches to the role of women is reflected in the convening in November 2000, with United Nations participation, of the first summit of Arab women on the theme of present challenges and future prospects; it will focus on the role of Arab women and their history in society-building and in meeting the challenges facing the Arab nation.

I express the pride and pleasure of the League of Arab States at the fact that two Arab women were recently appointed to senior United Nations posts, as the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund and as the Regional Director of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States.

The Assembly's consideration today of the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States does not take place in isolation from the efforts of the two international organizations to bring about a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of the principles of the United Nations Charter and resolutions of international legality.

In that context, heads of State or Government of Arab States, at the conclusion of the special Arab summit held at Cairo on 21 and 22 October 2000, affirmed that Israel, the occupying Power, bears responsibility for having returned the region to a climate of tension and violence through its acts of aggression, its practices and its siege of the Palestinians, all of which constitute a breach of its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and a flagrant violation of the rules of international law, and which have damaged efforts to build peace in the region.

The Arab leaders reaffirmed that peace must be just and comprehensive if it is to be lasting. They reaffirmed that the Arab approach to peace demands that Israel manifest equal commitment through compliance with international law, and in particular with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and General Assembly resolution 194 (III), relating to the right of return and compensation for Palestinian refugees, along with all other relevant international resolutions and the principles of the peace process, first and foremost the principle of land for peace.

While welcoming the increased role of the United Nations in salvaging and reviving the peace process on all tracks, the League of Arab States calls upon the Organization to work to bring about the implementation of the resolutions it has adopted over the years on the question of Palestine, the question of the Middle East and the question of Al-Quds Al-Sharif. That would sustain the Organization's credibility and would legally, morally and politically obligate all States to implement those resolutions.

We reaffirm in conclusion that the League of Arab States, which has long enjoyed observer status in the United Nations and which has cooperated with the Organization on a variety of programmes, looks forward to the consolidation and deepening of that cooperation. The League hopes that our common objectives will be attained through such cooperation. We are confident that the Assembly's consensus adoption of the draft resolution before it today will be a strong motivation to promote and vitalize that cooperation for the benefit of both organizations.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.18. May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/55/L.18 was adopted (resolution 55/10).

The Acting President: Before calling on the delegation wishing to speak in explanation of position, I remind delegations that statements in explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes.

Mr. Shacham (Israel): The delegation of Israel has joined the consensus on a resolution on this item for the seventh time in a row. In doing so, we are guided by the desire to make peace with our neighbours, all of which are members of the League of Arab States. Israel supports cooperation between the United Nations and various regional organizations, including the League of Arab States. Indeed, such cooperation is based on the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

This is the first resolution on an issue related to the Middle East to be adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. We are pleased that the resolution was adopted by consensus. In joining the consensus, we would like to demonstrate to all parties our willingness to forgo unnecessary discord in international forums, and to stress the need to exercise restraint both in the language of draft resolutions to be submitted and in all related statements. We cannot restore confidence and trust in the Middle East by engaging in polemics in our debates in New York. Peacemaking is by its very nature a bilateral endeavour between the parties, and controversial rhetoric offered in international forums is surely counterproductive.

It is unfortunate, however, that this debate regarding cooperation between the United Nations and a regional organization was exploited by one speaker to direct attacks against a Member State and to promote a partisan political perspective. The latest summit of the leaders of Arab League States was mentioned in this debate; had it not been mentioned, it would not have been necessary for the Israeli delegation to reiterate its view of the decisions taken at that summit. Israeli utterly rejected the language of threats used at the recent Cairo summit, and condemned the call for continued violence against it. The decisions of the Arab summit in Cairo placed responsibility for the recent events and for the damage to the peace process exclusively upon Israel in a distortion of reality and in disregard for Israel's far-reaching readiness to move towards an agreement. At Camp David recently, Israel made courageous and far-reaching proposals in order to achieve a peace agreement with the Palestinians and a historic reconciliation with the Arab world. Regrettably, Chairman Arafat and the Palestinians did not respond in any way to these proposals; instead, they plunged the region into a whirlpool of violence and bloodshed.

Israel calls upon the Palestinians to honour their commitments to halt the violence and incitement, immediately restore calm and order and prevent an additional escalation of the violence. Israel stresses that it continues to strive for peace while uncompromisingly defending its vital security interests, and it will continue to act to foster reconciliation between it and the Arab world, but not at any price and not under pressure of violence.

Furthermore, Israel felt that the decisions of the Arab summit, which called for a freeze on the multilateral talks and cooperation with Israel, are disappointing and run counter to the decisions of the Madrid Conference, which established two tracks — bilateral and multilateral — side by side. The existence of channels of communication between the parties is particularly important in times of tension and we regret the decisions adopted by the Arab summit against normalization of relations between Arab States and Israel. It is our view that these decisions do not assist but, rather, hinder the efforts to establish a comprehensive and lasting peace in our region. Nevertheless, Israel will not be dissuaded from its determination to move forward and will continue to strive to achieve real peace.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 25?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: In view of the lateness of the hour, I would like to inform members that the remaining items on the agenda for this morning, namely, agenda item 173, "Towards global partnerships", and agenda item 183, "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean Peninsula", will be taken up tomorrow morning as the first two items.

The meeting rose at 1.45 p.m.